

IN THE CLAIMS

1. **(currently amended)** A connection data change device, comprising:

a connection data management part configured to manage connection data for connecting an associated switching unit, in which the connection data change device is provided, with an external switching unit; and

a change operation part configured to change the connection data so that the connection with the external switching unit is changed to a fixed connection type or a variable connection type,

wherein said change operation part changes the connection to the external switching unit from the variable connection type to the fixed connection type upon receiving a request to change the connection to the external switching unit.

2. (previously presented) The connection data change device as claimed in claim 1, wherein said change operation part changes the connection with the external switching unit to the fixed or variable connection type in accordance with a command input from an outside.

3. **(currently amended)** The connection data change device as claimed in claim 1, comprising:

a detection part configured to detect the external connected switching unit;

a message compilation part configured to generate a message controlling a change operation part of the ~~external~~ detected external switching unit; and

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a transmission part configured to transmit the message to the ~~external~~ detected external switching unit.

4. (currently amended) The connection data change device as claimed in claim 3, further comprising an analysis part configured to receive an incoming message from the external switching unit and to analyze contents thereof, the incoming message controlling the change operation part of the associated switching unit.

5. (previously presented) The connection data change device as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a release part configured to change the connection with the external switching unit from the fixed connection type to the variable connection type and to release the connection with the external switching unit.

6. (currently amended) The connection data change device as claimed in claim 5, further comprising:

- a detection part configured to detect the external connected switching unit;
- a message compilation part configured to generate a message controlling a release part of the detected external switching unit;

- a transmission part configured to transmit the message to the ~~other~~ detected external switching unit; and

- an analysis part configured to receive an incoming message from the external switching unit and to analyze contents of the incoming message, the incoming message controlling the release part of the connection data change device.

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7. (previously presented) The connection data change device as claimed in claim 5, further comprising a release reason storage part configured to store a valid release reason for releasing the connection with the external switching unit.

8. (currently amended) A connection data change method, comprising the steps of:
extracting connection data for connection of ~~an associated~~ a first switching unit with an ~~external~~ a second switching unit; and
changing the extracted connection data so that the connection with the ~~external~~ second switching unit is changed to a fixed connection type or a variable connection type,
wherein the connection to the ~~external~~ second switching unit is changed from the variable connection type to the fixed connection type upon receiving a request to change the connection to the ~~external~~ second switching unit.

9. (previously presented) A switching unit, comprising:
a connection data management part configured to manage connection data for connection with an external switching unit; and
a change operation part configured to change the connection data so that the connection with the external switching unit is changed to a fixed connection type or a variable connection type,
wherein said change operation part changes the connection to the external switching unit from the variable connection type to the fixed connection type upon receiving a request to change the connection to the external switching unit.

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10. (currently amended) The switching unit as claimed in claim 9, further comprising:

- a detection part configured to detect the external connected switching unit;
- a message compilation part configured to generate a message controlling a change operation part of the detected external switching unit;
- a transmission part configured to transmit the message to the detected external switching unit; and
- an analysis part configured to receive an incoming message from the external switching unit and to analyze contents thereof, the incoming message controlling the change operation part of the switching unit.

11. (previously presented) The switching unit as claimed in claim 9, further comprising:

- a release part configured to change the connection with the external switching unit from the fixed connection type to the variable connection type and to release the connection with the external switching unit; and
- a release reason storage part configured to store a valid release reason for releasing the connection with the external switching unit.